## REMARKS

Claims 1-30 are currently pending in the present Application, with claim 31 standing withdrawn pursuant to an Election/Restriction Requirement.

In the May 3, 2005 Office Action, the previously pending rejections were essentially restated:

- Claims 1, 5, 8-10 and 12 under § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5.948,185 to Krajewski, *et al.* ("Krajewski").
- Claims 2-3, 6-7, 13, 16-17, 19-21 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Krajewski.
- Claims 4, 14-15, 18 and 22 under § 103(a) as unpatentable over Krajewski in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,000,007 to Develay, et al. ("Develay").
- Claims 11, 24-29 and 30 under § 103(a) as unpatentable over Krajewski in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,587,042 to St. Denis ("St. Denis").

In response to the prior October 15, 2005 Office Action, which rejected the pending claims over references teaching reinforced body skin panels, the Applicants amended the claims to clarify that the recited method for producing a structural component for a motor vehicle is directed to producing *load-bearing* structural members, such as the engine supports or rear longitudinal rails discussed in Specification ¶ [0009].

The Applicants further noted how the use of flanging for the formation of such structural components was novel and offered a number of advantages, including superior performance during deformation. Indeed, as noted in Specification ¶ [0012], while it has been well known to use flanging methods in forming *non*-weight-bearing components such as outer skins, it has not been

known to replace methods such as riveting or welding with flanging to form components designed to sustain high loads.

In the pending May 3, 2005 Final Office Action, it is asserted that the body skin panels "will support at least a minimal load," and therefore the claimed load-bearing structure limitation is met. The Applicants strongly disagree that the body skin panels of the cited references are "load-bearing *structural* components" (rather than panels incapable of resisting anymore than a negligible load), or that the cited references even begin to suggest the heretofore present method of producing vehicle *structural* components using flanging techniques. Nonetheless, in order to advance the pending case to allowance, the Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to expressly recite that the load bearing structural component does not contain a body skin, *i.e.*, "said structural component not including an external body panel skin member."

As previously noted, the Krajewski reference teaches a method for joining a body panel skin (an "outer panel form[ing] the decorative and functional outline of the vehicle panel") to an underlying support (an "inner panel serv[ing] a reinforcing function"). Krajewski at 1:19-21. Krajewski further focuses on teaching the bending of softened aluminum flanges in a manner to avoid unsightly cracking as the inner panel is captured. Nothing in this reference is directed to, or even can be read as suggesting, the previously unknown use of flanging to produce acceptable load-bearing structures for motor vehicles.

The remaining references are also directed solely to production of body skin panels, such as Develay's teaching stamping, pressing, or deep-drawing of

vehicle body panels, and St. Denis' use of a heat-generating device to heat a flange area to aid in formation of "vehicle panels such as doors, hoods, deck lids ... ." St. Denis at 1:18-19. Thus, no combination of Krajewski, Develay and/or St. Denis teaches or suggests claim 1's method "for producing a load bearing structural component for a motor vehicle, said structural component not including an external body panel skin member and including at least two shell sections that are attached to one another along flanges, comprising attaching the shell sections of the structural component to one another by flanging."

In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention recited in claims 1-30 is patentable over Krajewski and over the combination of this reference with Develay and/or St. Denis. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the pending § 102 and § 103 rejections is respectfully requested.

## CONCLUSION

The Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-30 are in condition for allowance. Early and favorable consideration and issuance of a Notice of Allowance for these claims is respectfully requested.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #080437.52869US).

Respectfully submitted,

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